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Internationally Esteemed Dancer and Teacher Appointed Oregon Ballet Theatre School Director



After a national search, Oregon Ballet Theatre's (OBT) Board of Trustees has voted unanimously to appoint Katarina Svetlova to school director effective immediately. Svetlova has been serving as interim school director since May, and has deep roots in ballet across the region.

Born in Germany and raised in both Germany and the US, Svetlova is of Bulgarian and Native American heritage. She received her classical ballet training primarily from Haydee Gutierrez in Miami, Florida, and continued studying with Gutierrez at the OBT School. She also studied at the John Cranko School in Stuttgart and The Princess Grace Academy in Monte Carlo.

Svetlova began her professional career at 15 as a principal dancer with OBT from 1995-2002, performing in a wide range of repertoire including works by James Canfield, Peter Martins, Trey McIntyre, and Sarah Slipper. She went on to an international dance career as a principal dancer with Deutsche Oper Am Rhein Ballett, one of Germany's leading ballet companies, from 2002-2007.

During her years abroad, Svetlova performed many lead roles in both classical and contemporary ballets ranging from *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Cinderella*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, to world premieres by John Neumeier, Mats Ek, Anna Laguna, and Hans Van Manen. Svetlova toured extensively throughout Asia and Western Europe, and in 2004 was awarded Artist of the Year by the City of Dusseldorf, Germany.

Upon her retirement from dancing in 2007, Svetlova returned to the States to share her love for dance through her passion for teaching. In addition to staging work for James Canfield at Nevada Ballet Theatre, she taught and coached for Oregon Ballet Theatre School, Central Utah Ballet Academy, Vancouver School of the Arts, Columbia Dance School, Sultanov Russian Ballet Academy, Steps PDX, and The Portland Ballet.

In 2011 Svetlova founded Dance from the Heart PDX, a ballet school for both children and adults. In her 10 years as owner, choreographer and sole teacher, Svetlova has trained over 900 students, including children and adults.





In addition to high standards for excellence in training, Svetlova is committed to cultivating a welcoming and inclusive environment in the studio. Her priority is the mental well-being of each dancer, and she is passionate about increasing diversity in dance, fostering a culture that reminds us that dance is for everyone.

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ABOUT OBT

Founded in 1989, OBT is among the nation's leading professional ballet companies, employing 250 people and attracting artists from around the globe with its reputation for excellence. OBT's mission is to share our passion for the expressive power of ballet, inspire an enduring appreciation of dance, and connect to our community through excellence in performance, training and education.

In addition to the quality of its artistic product, OBT continues to thrive organizationally and has emerged from COVID exceptionally well-positioned for the future. The nationally acclaimed OBT School is robust, with 300 students from across the country. Education and Community Engagement reaches thousands of students in classrooms across the state, 50% of whom are youth of color. OBT has a multi-year action plan to advance diversity, equity and inclusion. The Board is actively engaged in oversight, strategy and fundraising. OBT remains debt-free; 2022 was its eighth consecutive year operating in the black financially, and the organization maintains a Board-designated building fund approaching \$5 million. Learn more at obt.org.